

## ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A system and method employ a client-server architecture that abstracts from the client the states of objects and transitions between the states. As a result, the server maintains 5 objects, along with associated states, and state transitions that are provided to clients on demand. The client is only provided with a set of valid transitions between states that are based on the current state of the object and valid transitions out of that state. The states may be additionally filtered based on the permissions granted to the client. In this way, the client 10 is relieved of prior knowledge of valid object states and state transitions. Hence, in a document management system, for example, new states and transitions for objects may be 15 added at the server and propagated through to the clients.